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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FORMER SEAT PLEASANT POLICE CHIEF CONVICTED OF
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY OFFENSES**

GREENBELT, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that a federal jury convicted Ronald C. Forrest, age 39, of Clinton, Maryland for crimes committed in connection with the sexual exploitation of a minor for the purpose of producing sexually explicit images of the minor and possession of child pornography. Until his arrest last September, Ronald Forrest was the Chief of Police for the City of Seat Pleasant.

The evidence at trial established that in 1999, Forrest met a minor male and began mentoring him through the City of Seat Pleasant Police Department Junior Police Program. Thereafter, between in or about 2000 and 2002, Forrest persuaded and induced the minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct so that Forrest could produce digital images and Polaroid pictures of such conduct. In addition, Forrest possessed the pictures of child pornography in a photo album in a basement closet of his residence. Law enforcement was made aware that the incidents occurred after an acquaintance of the defendant discovered the incriminating photo album.

Following the announcement of the verdict, the judge ordered the defendant held without bond pending sentencing. The defendant is scheduled for sentencing before the Honorable

Alexander Williams, Jr. on August 18, 2004. Forrest faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years for each of the two counts relating to the sexual exploitation of a minor for the purpose of producing child pornography, and a maximum possible penalty of 5 years for each of the possession of child pornography counts. Each charge carries a maximum \$250,000 fine.

The case is a result of a seven-month investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's "Innocent Images" Squad and the Baltimore City Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Gina L. Simms and David I. Salem.